

Dengue

What is dengue?

Dengue (pronounced `den' gee) is a disease caused by any one of four closely related dengue viruses (DENV-1, DENV-2, DENV-3, or DENV-4).

What are the symptoms of dengue?

There are three types of illness that can result from infection with a dengue virus: dengue fever (DF), dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF), and dengue shock syndrome (DSS). The main symptoms of DF are high fever, severe headache, severe pain behind the eyes, joint pain, muscle and bone pain, rash, and may include mild bleeding from the nose or mouth, and bruising. Generally, younger children and those with their first dengue infection have a milder illness than older children and adults.

DHF typically begins with signs and symptoms similar to DF. Rather than recover, DHF patients proceed to experience more bleeding, persistent vomiting, severe pain in the abdomen, and fluid accumulation in the abdomen and around the lungs as the smallest blood vessels (capillaries) begin to leak. If not treated, DHF can progress to shock (DSS) and death.

How is dengue/ DHF treated?

There is no specific treatment for dengue infection. Rest and fluids are generally sufficient for persons with DF. DHF and DSS require hospitalization for intensive medical care.

Where does dengue occur?

Dengue occurs in many tropical and sub-tropical areas of the world, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Central and South America. With the exceptions of parts of Mexico, Puerto Rico, and small areas in southern Texas and southern Florida, dengue does not occur in North America. Worldwide there are an estimated 50 to 100 million cases of DF and several hundred thousand cases of DHF per year.

How do you get dengue?

People get dengue from the bite of an infected mosquito. A mosquito becomes infected when it bites a person who has dengue virus in the blood. It takes a week or more for the dengue organisms to mature in the mosquito; then the mosquito can transmit the virus to another person when it bites them. In the Western Hemisphere, various species of *Aedes* mosquitoes transmit the virus. Although several species of *Aedes* mosquito occur in California, none is capable of transmitting dengue virus. Dengue virus cannot be transmitted directly from person to person.

What can I do to keep from getting dengue?

People are at risk for dengue whenever they travel to areas where dengue virus and *Aedes* mosquitoes exist. There is no vaccine to prevent dengue. Travelers to dengue areas need to reduce their likelihood of being bitten by mosquitoes. Screens on windows and doors should be examined to confirm that they are in good repair. Repellents containing 20% to 30% DEET should be applied to exposed skin and clothing to keep mosquitoes from biting.

Where can I find more information about dengue/ DHF?

Visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/dengue/>

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